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Proudly representing Eastern Washington in the United States House of Representatives

### **INSIDE CONGRESS** **FOR WEEK ENDING JANUARY 25, 2002** **by United States Representative** **George R. Nethercutt, Jr.**

Welcome to this week's edition of Inside Congress. I am glad to share with you a little of my work in the national legislature. Please follow the listed links or contact my office for more information on the topics mentioned here.

#### **REDISTRICTING LINES FINALIZED**

The new Congressional districts for our state have been finalized. Every ten years, new Congressional boundaries are drawn based on the latest census information.

As you may know, there was some difficulty in agreeing to the boundaries set to take effect in 2002. A redistricting commission comprised of two Democrats, two Republicans and a nonvoting chairman originally missed its December 15th statutory deadline for drawing new maps but did meet a constitutional deadline of January 1st. This week the Governor signed a measure that retroactively changes the deadline for submitting a final map of Washington's congressional and legislative districts. The law clears the way for the 2002 election boundaries to become effective on Feb. 12, the final date by which the Legislature can make minor amendments to the plan.

Under the plan currently proposed, Okanogan County will be included in the 5th Congressional District. I look forward to representing the people of this new area.

#### **STRESSING THE IMPORTANCE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY**

This week I joined some of my colleagues in sending a letter to President Bush urging him to devote 3% of the defense spending in the forthcoming budget to science and technology. The Department of Defense Science and Technology Program has been a critical source of new ideas and innovative technologies to enhance our national security. While we can look to the private sector for support of the program, leadership and funding must come from the federal

government. Lack of investment in defense scientific research will have a devastating effect on the future capabilities of our armed services. I will keep you informed as the budget process takes place in Washington, D.C.

## **TROUBLE WITH TAX FORMS**

The Internal Revenue Service (IRS) has announced that many early filers are making an error on their federal taxes due to a new line on the form. The line is for the Rate Reduction Credit, which taxpayers use if they *did not* receive last summer's Advance Payment in the maximum amount for their filing status.

Some taxpayers are putting their Advance Payment amount on the credit line when they should be leaving it blank. *If you have already received the maximum amount for your filing status, you should skip the Rate Reduction Credit line on your tax form.*

The maximum amounts are:

\$300 for a single person or a married person filing separately;

\$500 for a head of household;

\$600 for a married couple filing jointly

Taxpayers who make an error related to this credit should wait to see if the IRS catches it during processing. If you make an error and the IRS does not contact you by the time you receive your refund, you may file an amended return to correct the error.

I hope this information helps you as you fill out your tax forms.

## **ON THE FLOOR:**

Here is a recap of the legislative activity for the week:

**H.R. 700** - Asian Elephant Conservation Reauthorization Act. It passed 349-23. I voted Yes.

**H.R. 2234** - Tumacacori National Historical Park Boundary Revision Act of 2001. It passed 356-14. I voted Yes.

**S. 1762** - To establish fixed interest rates for student and parent borrowers.

Although it received a majority of votes (257-148), the measure was not adopted because it was considered under suspension of the rules and therefore had to receive a two-thirds majority to be enacted. I voted Yes.

## **SCHEDULE**

This week I was pleased to welcome Neil Norman and his wife, Janet, to my office in Washington, D.C. The Normans were in town attending a National Society of Professional Engineers conference. I met with Ernie Kelly, President of the Association of Communication Enterprises. Spokane Mayor John Powers stopped by to discuss issues important to our area. I met with Terry Racehorse and Michael Jordan from Pullman regarding education issues relating to the Native American Community. Mark Vinson with Olympic Airport Security came by to discuss airport security. Nicole Heigh, Freeman High; Blair McKeirnan, Pomeroy High; and Jessica Stiller, Pomeroy High stopped by during their visit to Washington D.C to participate in the National Young Leaders Conference. I met with JD Hammerly of ALSTOM ESCA Corporation in Bellevue to discuss energy issues affecting the northwest. Linda Jones, Mike Conley, and Christine Stollard with the Grant County PUD along with Tim Peckinpaugh from Preston Gates came by to discuss relicensing efforts for the Priest Rapids and Wanapum dams as well as other natural resource issues. Mike Conley also stopped by later with Pend Oreille Commissioner Dan Peterson and Karen Price of Morgan Meguire to discuss electric restructuring and energy production.

## **CONTACT INFORMATION:**

I always enjoy hearing from you. Please feel free to contact me if I can be of assistance to you in any matter. Here are some of the ways you may reach me, especially if you know of others who may want to receive this report each week or would like to be removed from this mailing list:

### **Spokane Office**

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### **Spokane Valley Office**

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